

Amendments to the Claims

1. (amended) The method of using the Internet to create and host a customized online gathering of participants which occurs at a scheduled time comprising, in combination, the steps of:

providing at least one server computer connected to the Internet for communicating with a plurality of client computers operated by users which are also connected to the Internet, storing at said server computer:

a) template data defining one or more template web pages, each of said template web pages implementing a predetermined activity in which said users may participate as part of said online gathering ~~gather~~,

b) an identification of said first user as the host of said online gathering,

c) a guest list accepted from said first user identifying a plurality of other invited users,

d) a specification of a scheduled time or scheduled time range during which the online gathering will occur, and

e) ~~d~~) customization data accepted from said first user,

combining said template data and said customization data to create customized web pages which together implement said customized online gathering,

establishing at said scheduled time or during said scheduled time range an authorized connection via the Internet between said server computer and each of said invited users that choose to participate in said gathering and,

responding to requests received from any given one of said invited users during said online gathering by transmitting to said given user ~~one~~ a requested one of said customized Web pages.

2. (original) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said guest list includes the email addresses of at least some of said other users and further including the step performed before said scheduled time or scheduled time range of transmitting an invitation to said gathering to each of said email addresses.

3. (original) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said customization data accepted from said first user includes the designation of a gathering type and wherein, in response to said designation of said gathering type, said server computer automatically establishes a set of predetermined default values for said customization data which are combined with said template data to produce preliminary customized pages.

4. (amended) The method as set forth in claim 3 wherein said gathering type is designated by the combination of an occasion type and a theme associated with said occasion type.

5. (original) The method as set forth in claim 3 further including the steps of accepting from said first user replacement attribute values which may be substituted for particular ones of said default values to modify said preliminary customized pages.

6. (original) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said at least one server computer comprises a first server which acts as an application service provider for presenting said Web pages to users who access at least some of said Web pages using addresses supplied by a collaborating server computer.

7. (amended) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein at least a given one of said template web pages implements an activity in which said invited users may communicate with one another, said method including the further steps of accepting contributed data from one or more of said other invited users, storing said contributed data ~~date~~ on said server computer, and thereafter displaying at least selected contributed data as part of said given one of said Web pages.

8. (new) The method of creating and hosting scheduled online gatherings of participating users which comprises, in combination, the steps of:

providing a web server for exchanging information via the Internet with a plurality of remotely located web browsers each of which is operated by one of said users;

storing template data accessible to said web server, said template data including a plurality of template web pages at least one of which implements an interactive activity in which said users may participate;

accepting an application from a particular one of said users to host one or more of said online gatherings, and responsive to said application designating said particular one of said users as the host of at least one specific online gathering;

accepting from said host customization data for modifying or supplementing one or more of said template web pages to produce customized web pages to be transmitted from said Web server to said guest users during said specific online gathering,

accepting from said host a designation of the time or times when said specific online gathering is scheduled to occur;

prior to said time or times when said specific online gathering is scheduled to occur, transmitting an invitation to participate in said specific online gathering to each of said guests, said invitation including the specification of said time or times and the URL of at least one of said Web pages;

at said time or times designated by said host, employing said Web server to host said online gathering by making said customized web pages available to said guests.

9. (new) The method of creating and hosting customized online gatherings as set forth in claim 8 further the steps, performed prior to said time or times when said specific online gathering is to occur, of:

accepting from said host guest list data including the email addresses of a plurality of guest users who are to be invited to participate in said specific online gathering, and

thereafter transmitting said invitation to attend said specific online gathering to each of said email addresses.

10. (new) The method of creating and hosting customized online gatherings as set forth in claim 8 wherein said web server operates in collaboration with one or more other web servers.

11. (new) The method of creating and hosting customized online gatherings as set forth in claim 8 wherein said customization data includes the designation of a chosen theme for said specific online gathering and wherein said customized web pages are selected from said plurality of said template web pages in accordance with said designation to implement said chosen theme for said online gathering.

12. (new) The method of creating and hosting customized online gatherings as set forth in claim 8 wherein said customization data includes the designation of one or more of said interactive activities to be made available to said participating users as part of said specific online gathering.